

RINGELTAUBE

PIONEER MISSIONARY TO INDIA

By

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MORNING

“Behold a sower went out to sow, and it came to pass as he sowed some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth, but when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred-fold.”



It is impossible to tell the story of such a strenuous life as that of William Tobias Ringeltaube in a few pages. One could as easily bind the harvest of the year in a single sheaf. Only a very imperfect appreciation of it can be condensed into so small a space,—a space no longer than three or four columns of the *Daily News*.

Betwixt the days when he wandered a happy, careless boy among the cherry and apple orchards around his father's parsonage in Silesia, and the day when he suddenly vanishes out of our sight, he condensed an amount of work that would take more than a long winter night to tell, and would surpass in interest Shakespere's "Winter's Tale."

The incidents of his early life are soon told. He was a country parson's son, brought up among peasant folk, occasionally catching glimpses of a larger world than that which lay about him, for by the time he was sixteen years of age his father had become Court Preacher and General Superintendent of Oels.

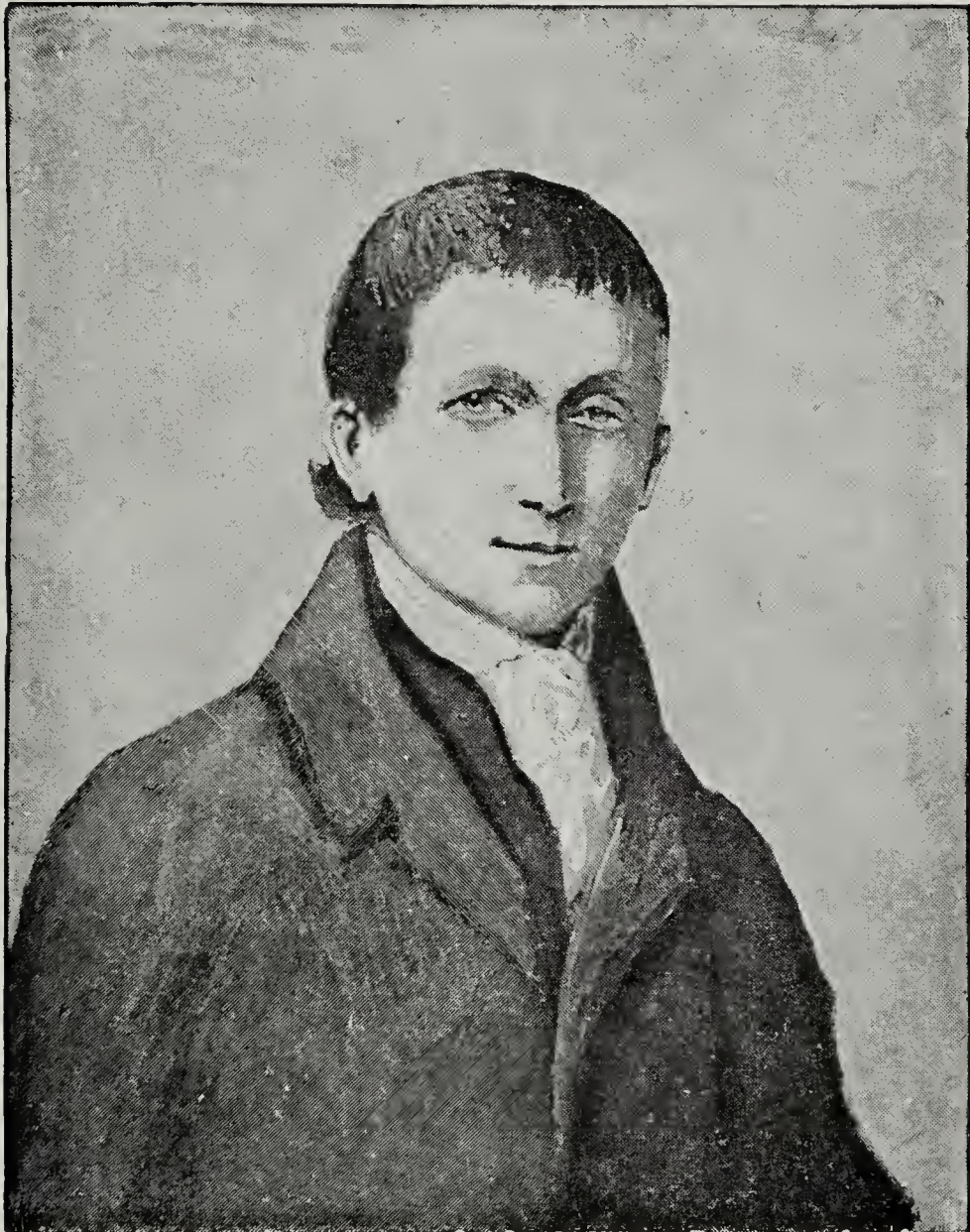
After attending the usual courses at the Gymnaseum, he became a student in the University at Halle. There he attained no conspicuous position. Nobody goes on pilgrimages to the rooms he occupied. He did not make Halle the envy of all the universities of Europe by the greatness of his reputation. His place in its annals is not with the illustrious few, but the undistinguished many, who had to win eminence, if ever they succeeded in doing so, in other fields. He was never at home there. Evenings that saw other students in the theatres and wine-shops were spent by him in spiritual conflict and study of the Scriptures. He knew what home-sickness was. Memory in the tender "light that never was on sea or land" recalled the landscape about his father's house; "the knolls once more where, couched at ease, the white kine glimmered, and the trees laid their dark arms about the fields."

His conversion took place while he was tutor to the son of a certain Count Pfiel. The Countess Pfiel was a woman of rare sweetness of disposition. The radiant purity and loveliness of her character, and the motherly interest she manifested in the spiritual anxieties of the young tutor, led to his decision for God. There had been times before he knew her when he was troubled with doubts in regard to the truths he had learnt at home. The professors of the University had almost destroyed his belief in God and in the life to come. In his diary he writes of lonely walks, during which he wrestled with the new doubts that assailed his faith, after a lecture was finished.

It was a happy fortune that brought the shy and anxious

tutor under the notice of the Countess Pfiel. Soon after this his sister Anna, whom he tried now to lead into the same joyous and unclouded faith in Christ which he enjoyed, gave her heart to God.

It was his original intention to be a Moravian missionary ;



Ringeltaube.

but as the way did not seem open, he wrote to Dr. Schultze in Halle. Dr. Schultze, in reply, wrote him that the Christian Knowledge Society was in need of men for the English station of the Lutheran Missions in South India. His con-

gregations would be entirely of English-speaking people, and the salary £100 per annum. Ringeltaube replied with the frankness which always characterised him,—“To preach the simple but saving and sanctifying Word of the Cross to simple-minded men, who hitherto have not experienced its power, that is my desire; but not to dispute with unbelieving Englishmen in Calcutta. If I wanted to preach to nominal Christians I could do so with more ease in my own country.” “Still,” he said, if in spite of these remonstrances the Christian Knowledge Society should choose him, “I shall acknowledge the Divine call, and trusting Him Who is mighty in the weak, go to London and India.”

Schultze advised him to accept; his father to refuse. He did not think, he said, that his son could stand alone in Calcutta, and believed he had not got the experience, judgment, and firmness of faith necessary for such a place. Ringeltaube had, however, then consented; but on the receipt of his father's letter he withdrew, and fell ill through disappointment. His father then gave his permission.

Ringeltaube came to London to make preparations for his departure to India, but soon wished he had not been so precipitate. He found he had been throughout the negotiations labouring under a mistake;—that of believing the Christian Knowledge Society was the London Missionary Society. Ringeltaube sailed to India, and arrived in Calcutta in October, 1797. It was a blunder altogether, and ultimately he returned to England, arriving in London on July 17th, 1799. He reached Fulneck on October 28th of the same year, a sorrowful and suspected man,—suspected of inconstancy and desertion of his post.

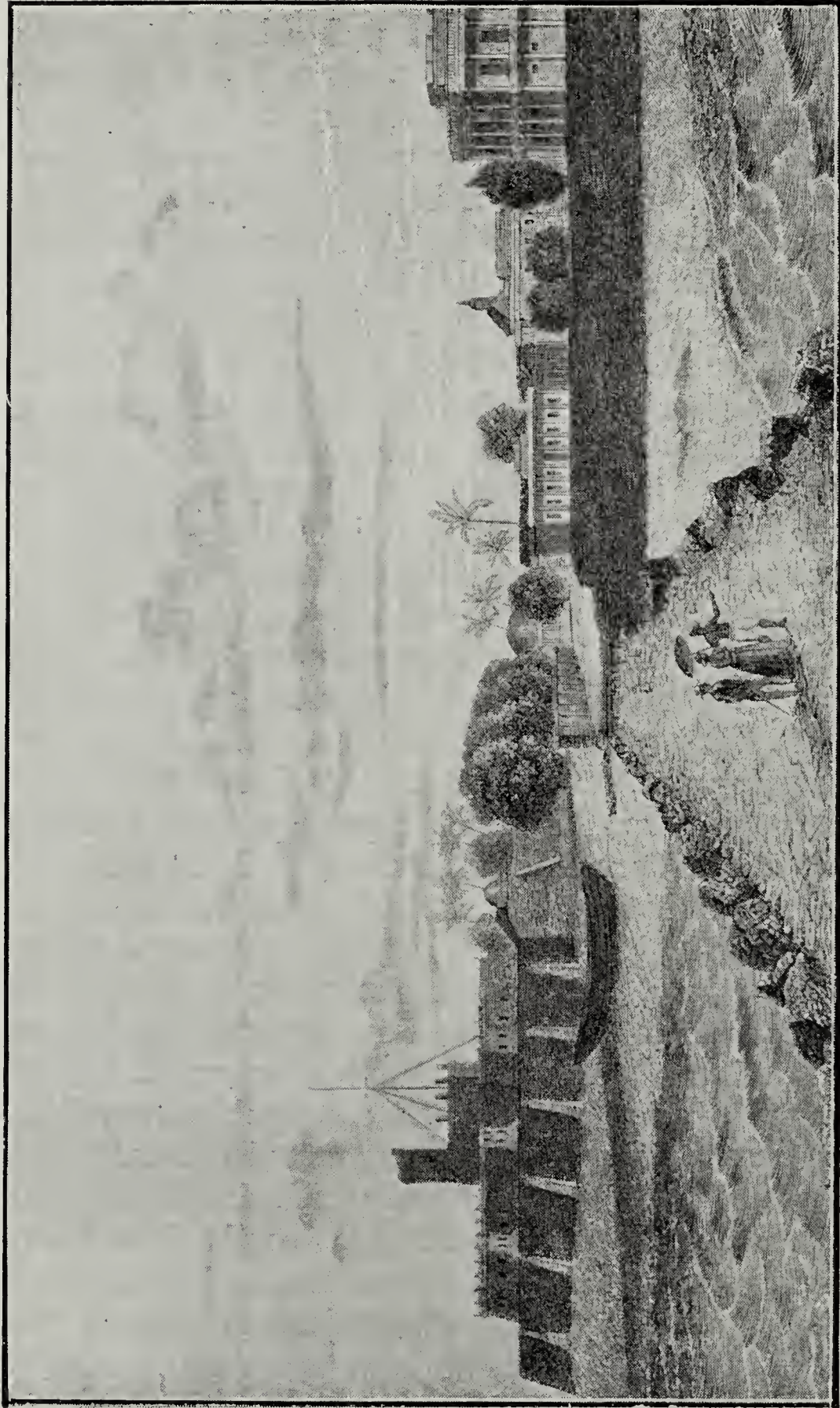
He asked the United Conference at Hernhutt to send him as a missionary, but his application was refused. The “lot” went against him. At last, however, came the long-delayed fulfilment of his heart's desire, and the welcome answer to the prayers of the baffled and harassed man, whom his Moravian

brethren had received coldly, and whom by what they regarded as a divine oracle they classed with him who, as Dante wrote, made the "Great Refusal."

On the 11th July, 1803, he writes to his sister Anna that he has received a call as a missionary to Ceylon from the directors of the London Missionary Society. On the 10th April, 1804, he sailed in the "Kron Princess Maria" from Copenhagen, travelling in a Danish ship. After a voyage of fifteen weeks he reached St. Simon's Bay. It was here he met with a remarkable Christian woman of whom he, who had known so rare and gentle a type of consecrated womanhood as the Countess Pfiel, writes: "Never have I met in a woman such a clear intellect, with so much grace. There is no affectation, no pretence; every word sounds as pure as if the Spirit of the Lord were speaking through her. Though only the widow of an African peasant, she speaks English quite correctly, and learnt it only from the Bible. Her beneficent influence extends far over neighbouring provinces, as far as half Germany."

The voyage was full of peril; as they sailed past Sumatra the fury of the storm was indescribable. They were for days in danger of shipwreck among the small islands. At last they saw the highest of the Nicobars, and next day the harbour of Narcoury. He describes scenes in the harbour with a picturesqueness that recalls De Foe. It was a kaleidoscope of brilliant colours. He had the eye of an artist for strange costumes, shrieking parrots, and distinguished royalties. A hundred yards away from the gay crowd glittered the clear water of a summer sea, upon which boats glided, over marvellous forests and meadows of coral. The floor was paved with exquisite shells. To voyagers, who were as weary of the grey sea as were the companions of Ulysses, the rest was exquisite.

On December 4th, 1804, they reached Tranquebar, "the mother town of all the Indian Missions." Here they met Dr.



Tranquebar in Ringeltaube's Time.

John, who had been labouring at Tranquebar for thirty years, and Dr. Cammerer. They found the Mission in a bad way. It was nearly ruined for want of workers. The first business was to master the language. To this Ringeltaube at once set himself. His work at Tranquebar after awhile was not satisfactory to him. Knowing this some of his friends tried to persuade him to leave, and, as an inducement, he was offered the chaplaincy of a Swiss regiment at Seringapatam. This he refused. He had other offers of a similar kind. At length he yielded to an urgent request by Mr. Kohlhoff, of Tanjore, to take temporary charge of the Tinnevelly congregation. His last five months at Tranquebar were spent in self-imposed loneliness. Hope's pillar of fire seemed slowly turning its dark side to him. He had not found his colleagues, the missionaries John and Cammerer, as sympathetic as he expected. He describes them as "old school foxes eaten up with a desire of ruling,"—a picturesque phrase that reveals much. Perhaps they had scarcely found this unconventional, undiplomatic man all they had expected. Be that as it may, he departed to take the oversight of the mission work at Tinnevelly, of which a very interesting account is given in the Rev. William Robinson's "Ringeltaube the Rishi." After the first three years his labours were principally confined to Travancore.

He tells a sad story of the troubles that befell Christian converts through the "black underlings" of the collectors. "They were," he says, "frequently driven from their homes, put in the stocks, exposed for a fortnight together to the heat of the raging sun and the chilling dews of the night; some were flogged till they consented to hold the torches of the heathen idols, and others were made to sweep the idols' temple." "All," he writes, "because there had been no European missionary to bring their complaints to the ear of the Government, who," he adds with the fine candour that always characterised him, "have never been deficient in their

duty to redress where the Christians have had to complain of real injuries.”

For courageous and honest reports of notorious cruelties like these, he and other missionaries came under the lash of the *Edinburgh Review*, in an article by Sydney Smith on “Indian Missions.” That brilliant wit and critic, who had often increased the gaiety of the nation, and had given all educated men and women hours of unmixed pleasure on other topics, dishonoured his rare genius when he wrote that article. The diamond-pointed pen that wrote “Peter Plymly’s Letters” and the “Letter to the Electors on the Roman Catholic Question” became a poisoned stiletto when he turned it on Indian Missions. Missions have survived. Time has sucked the poison out. The weapon has now only an antiquarian interest; still it remains the one dark stain on the bright escutcheon of a famous and liberal-minded Englishman, a literary Bayard, with that exception, “without fear and without reproach,”—and long since forgiven.

It may be well to make a quotation here to show how history has falsified the prognostications of the most able opponent missionary work in India has ever had. “The civil servant in India,” he wrote, “will not only not dare to exercise his own judgment in checking the indiscretions of ignorant missionaries, but he will strive to recommend himself to his holy masters in Leadenhall Street by imitating Brother Cran and Brother Ringeltaube, and by every species of fanatical excess. Methodism at home is no unprofitable game to play. In the East it will soon be the infallible road to promotion. This is the great evil; if the management was in the hands of men who were as discreet and wise in their devotion as they are in the matter of temporal welfare, to desire to put an end to missions might be premature and indecorous. But the misfortune is, the men who wield the instrument ought not to be trusted with it for a single instant. Upon this subject they are quite insane

and ungovernable; they would deliberately and piously and conscientiously expose our whole Eastern Empire to destruction for the sake of converting a half-dozen Brahmins, who, after stuffing themselves with rum and rice and borrowing money from the missionaries, would run away and cover the Gospel and its possessions with every species of impious ridicule and abuse."

That unhappy reference to the Brahmins was far likelier to kindle a flame of hatred of Englishmen and English rule in India than anything the men he held up to world-wide scorn could do.

NOON



THE following chapter shall be devoted to a few extracts from his diary and letters. His frankness may surprise us; but it is part of the man himself, and a quality not so common as to be despised. There can be no doubt of his loyalty to his Divine Master, or to the work of the London Missionary Society.

"10th April, 1806. The tribe of Shanars is very numerous both here and in Travancore. In the latter country I do not know if they resemble in all respects our Shanars. In this district I compute them to be at least fifty congregations, under the care of about thirty native teachers. A few of the latter (perhaps eight or nine) are rather respectable servants of God, as far as their knowledge goes. But the greater part have been enlisted in a hurry from among the Shanars themselves—reading and writing being the only qualities required. From these catechists and their deceitful and unworthy conduct my worst troubles arise. But till a seminary for forming better ones is established in these parts the evil must be

borne with, and the only thing I can do is to keep them in awe.

“ 25th April, 1806. Set out at dawn and made that passage through the hills which is called the Aramboly Ghaut, about noon. The country adjoining is almost uninhabited, owing, I suppose, to the violent gales from the ghauts. Yet there are marks of former and even of late cultivation.

“ As soon as we entered the ghaut, the grandest prospect of green-clad precipices, cloud-capped mountains, hills adorned with temples and castles, and other picturesque objects presented themselves. A noble avenue of immense banyan trees winding through the valley adds greatly to the beauty of the place. My timid companions, however, trembled at every step, being now on ground altogether in the power of the Brahmins, the sworn enemies of the Christian name; and, indeed, a little occurrence soon convinced us we were no more on British territory. I laid down to rest in a caravansary appropriated for Brahmins only, when the magistrate immediately sent word for me to remove, otherwise their god would no more eat! I reluctantly obeyed, and proceeded to the Southern Hills to a valley called Mayiladi. I spent the Lord's Day for the first time very uncomfortably in an Indian hut, in the midst of a noisy, gaping crowd, which filled the house.

“ 11th February, 1807. Bought a field close to Canaaur to settle on it, and moved into a little clay hut six feet by ten, which I purchased for one star pagoda. In the evening went to a neighbouring village, Karungulam, to visit some new people. Between these people and the Brahmins there is a lawsuit, which has been four times decided, and as often renewed; the object is a vast extent of ground. As soon as I came to the village the Brahmins rushed out in a body from their street, and followed me wherever I went with a terrible noise. I was glad to escape into the fields. Having returned, I found refuge in a house, and exhorted the candidates for Christianity. At my leaving the village I had again the Brahmins at my heels, and sure no pack of hounds ever made a more hideous noise. What they said I could not understand, as they spoke in their own tongue.”

“The Man from Travancore.”

This remarkable story is told so graphically by the Rev. William Robinson in his book, “Ringeltaube the Rishi,” that I give it in his own words. It can be more appropriately put among the few selections taken from the diary than anywhere else.



Brahmins Bathing.

“Vedamanikam was born of parents belonging to the right-hand caste—Pariahs. His father died early, leaving the son to the care of his widowed mother, who, being an intelligent woman, trained her son to earn his own living, and taught him to read and write. The boy grew up a devout Hindoo; an abstainer from intoxicating liquor. He also

fasted at certain prescribed times, was careful to avoid unclean things, preserved his caste, and was remarkable for his great devotion to the family god. To this god he built a pagoda, and endowed it with land. About this time he read the Puranas, and became a theist, being convinced that there is only one God, and that He must be worshipped without any image. Meanwhile, hearing that Chidambaram was one of the holiest shrines in South India, and that all who visited it would obtain eternal bliss, he determined to go on a pilgrimage to that place. Though he knew that this journey would be attended with great danger from Poligars, thieves, and others, he yet determined to go. Taking a sufficient sum of money, and calling his friends together, he requested that as he might die on the road they would give him the last drop of water, and the last grain of rice—this being an important part of the burial ceremony practised by these people. He visited all the temples which came in the course of his journey, and finally, after great hardships, reached Chidambaram.

“After worshipping at this shrine, and offering all the money he had, he was standing in the evening near the temple. Here he heard the beating of tom-toms and the singing of filthy songs. He saw Brahmins and dancing girls, and various shows common to the place, and thought within himself, ‘I left my home believing that Parama Sivan had made me his follower, and that I could enjoy all heavenly pleasures in this holy place. I have travelled far, enduring severe hardships, and now I cannot see anything I wished to see in this place. How can I meditate on God in the midst of these vain and empty shows: in this place so highly spoken of by the sages and in the Puranas? Here I cannot find any way to obtain eternal bliss. Where shall I go? While standing in grief and perplexity he leaned against one of the stone pillars of the temple, and, falling asleep, saw a vision in his dreams. A respectable old man with a staff in his hand appeared before him, and said, ‘All who come here are exposed to infinite punishment. Why did you come? I am minded to rebuke you and forgive your sin. Therefore do not stay here one moment; return to your village, and I will show you the way in which you should

walk.' So saying he appeared to strike Vedamanikam with his staff. He at once awoke, and seeing no one, was greatly astonished; however, he determined to leave the place, and having waked his nephew, they started towards the south early in the morning. On their way home they saw many temples, but did not worship any god for fear of the dream.

"He reached Tanjore safely, and there found his younger sister and her husband, who were Christians. Here Vedamanikam abode for some time, and heard much about Christianity from his relatives and the catechists. The day after



Old Chapel, Valiathera.

his arrival being Sunday, he accompanied his sister and brother-in-law to church, and as he had never before heard a sermon, he listened with great curiosity and attention. The missionary who preached, observing from the holy ashes with which he was smeared and pilgrim dress which he wore that he was a heathen pilgrim, took the opportunity to show that salvation could only be obtained in Jesus Christ. To this Vedamanikam listened carefully, and kept the matter in his heart. He afterwards wrote about it in his diary: 'When first I heard of the salvation of my soul, through the servants of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, my heart was touched and melted before God. The good news was like the light

of heaven shining upon me in the utter darkness, and therefore I did not like to leave the place.' After the service the missionary (Kohlhoff) came from the pulpit and inquired, 'Who are you, and from what village do you come?' Vedamanikam replied, 'We came from Travancore to visit Chidambaram in order that we might learn the way to salvation. The Supreme God has brought us here.' The missionary gave Vedamanikam a tract, entitled 'True Wisdom,' and desired him to read it and give his opinion about it in eight days. Vedamanikam went through the book, and was convinced of the truth of the Christian faith, and heartily embraced it. The next day he was baptised.

"Vedamanikam and his nephew, on account of their long absence, were supposed to be dead, and their relatives having called in the astrologers, they confirmed the supposition, and thereupon a great mourning ensued. One night, however, when the mother of the young man who went with Vedamanikam was mourning his supposed decease, she heard her son's voice, and going out to see who it was, found it was really her son. She embraced him, and shed tears of joy. Meanwhile, the neighbours, hearing that Vedamanikam had returned, came crowding into his house, and, prostrating themselves, asked, 'Where is the holy gift of the lord of Chidambaram, and the sacred ashes?' He answered, 'Lo! here is the Holy Gift of the Lord of all worlds,' and showed them a copy of the Gospels. As they had never seen paper before, they asked him, 'What is this? What is this?' He then gave a brief account of his journey, and read the Gospel to them. This they listened to eagerly and with great surprise. From this time forward Vedamanikam gathered together his friends, and all who would listen, and read the Scriptures to them, and taught them the catechism. He appears to have laboured with zeal and discretion, for 'he argued reasonably with Hindoos, and convinced them of their folly in worshipping idols.' He at this time gave Christian names to his family, so that the Hindoos might know that he and his people were Christians. While he thus exercised himself with godliness some of his heathen neighbours began to persecute him, and at length excommunicated him, whilst they served their idols with greater zeal than before. The

Gospel news which he had been spreading soon reached the house of the Royal family. The rulers, hearing of Vedamanikam's work, determined to extirpate him and his family. Persecution now became so trying that he wished to sell his property, in accordance with the missionary's advice, and remove to Tranquebar or Tanjore. Still he hesitated not to preach, and was encouraged by reading his Bible. One day, whilst reading and praying, he broke out into prayer, as follows: 'O Lord, when I worshipped idols, which have no life, Thou didst reveal Thyself to me a great sinner. Thou didst pass by the rich and learned and honourable people, and didst choose me to be Thine; now teach me, O Lord, what I should do. Put me in Thy right path, and let me know what I should do in this difficulty. Is it Thy will that the light which has begun to shine here should now be quenched?' Whilst praying thus it was borne into his mind that he should not sell his fields, as the Lord would help him to establish His Kingdom in Travancore. He decided to go and see Mr. Kohlhoff, feeling that God would comfort him by the good advice of His servant. He thereupon arranged for the conducting of divine service and reading of prayers in his house, after which he went to Tanjore.

"The missionaries were glad to see him, and asked him, 'Have you sold your property and come to live here?' He replied, 'I have not, though our country is full of opponents to the Gospel; by the grace of God we have a small congregation who worship in the name of Jesus our Saviour. If they can but keep on, others will join them; but if there is no prospect of obtaining help, I have decided to emigrate to this place, and am now come to ask your advice in this matter.' Mr. Kohlhoff then said, 'It is well you have not sold your lands. God has had mercy upon you, and has sent you a missionary called Ringeltaube; he is now learning Tamil, and when he has made sufficient progress in the language he will go to your village.' At this good news Vedamanikam rejoiced, and blessed God for answering His servant's prayers. Ringeltaube was at this time in Madras, but Vedamanikam went there to see him, and received advice and great help from the new missionary, who promised to go to Mayiladi as soon as possible. Vedamanikam returned

laden with books and tracts, and found his people continuing steadfast in the truth. He said to them, 'The Lord hath heard our prayer. A missionary is coming in a short time. We shall see him here. Henceforth we need not leave our village; here we may worship God. The persecution of our enemies is not beyond the power of God, for He can protect us in spite of all.'

"From this time they worshipped God daily, morning and



Christian Chapel.

evening. On the principle of being thorough in all he did, Vedamanikam destroyed all his heathen books, even the horoscopes of the family, for which reason his age is not correctly known. He was growing in grace and humility, and was so kind that even those who intended to do him mischief, when they saw his face, were constrained to speak gently to him, and forgot the evil they had desired to do."

Here the narrative may fitly close, as it brings us to the time of Ringeltaube's first visit. On April 25th, 1806,

Ringeltaube passed through the Aramboly Ghaut. This was the first time a Protestant missionary had crossed the frontier, and the day is memorable in Travancore.

I now give a few extracts from letters which Ringeltaube sent to friends at home. The following, written from Travancore to his brother, is dated August 27th, 1814:—

“As to my circumstances, they are still the same, and in some respects like yours. Roof of straw there—roof of palm leaves here. Black peasants here, white peasants there. German deists there, English deists here. You live near the large town of Berlin; I live near the large Indian sea, about one mile from Cape Comorin (Mayiladi). You can have conversation and books as much as you like. I often see no European face for three or four weeks. You cannot have confidential intercourse with many of the people. They are great rogues; the poorest of them consent to be made proselytes for money and good words, and afterwards they cleave to you like leeches. . . . I have about 600 of them (adults), and therefore I am quite poor. I don't know any trouble greater than writing reports, and I suppose that this trouble will drive me away at length, unless by God's good providence I am released soon, but as I am still healthy there is no probability of it.”

In a letter to his brother Ernest from Tranquebar he writes:—

“The flat roofs are a great resource. The setting sun, the rising moon, the solemn vaulted sky with its crown of stars, the crests of the palm trees rustling so softly, the murmur of the surf on the beach close at hand, with the devilish music of tom-toms and pipes in the temples make a peculiar impression on the mind. Our next neighbour is the idol Permual, a small image with a golden head. He is said to eat every day three measures of rice. His priests and dancing girls awake him every morning with music, and in the evening he takes a walk round his temple accompanied by music and torches. Last week he was married to a large

black idol, with a bullock's head, who lives in a very large pagoda near the sea. The piping, singing, tom-tomming, and dancing did not cease the whole night, consequently the bridegroom did not get up as early as usual the next morning, and we could meditate on our roofs without being disturbed."

The following letter is to his sister:—

"Udagherry, 1st December, 1810.

"MY DEAR ———,

"Come, we will talk a little with one another. Do you see the house thatched with straw and provided with ten pillars at the foot of the rock near the three large tamarind trees? That is your William's dwelling-place. . . .

"Well, what is to be seen here? Four broken chairs, two old couches made of wood and reed, a rope tied from one wall to the other, on which a coat, a gown, and some boots are hanging. Well, and what more? Shelves with books, two tables, and one lamp."

Here is a portion of another letter to his sister:—

"As to the education of Frederick you can have no better model than that of our Ernest. Instead of drawing, which is only wasting the time, I should recommend very much the study of music. Nobody knows what will come in the course of time, and a good musician finds friends everywhere. Pooh! pooh! your nice Frederick has perhaps huge flat ears and large mouth, for these are the only parts of his body you do not mention in your letter. What will become of him? Curled hair, blue eyes, a small nose. That boy cannot become a theologian. Perhaps a lawyer! I would never consent to that profession. Shall he then become a doctor of medicine? Just right. I shall send him all kinds of nice Indian medicines, which will make him a great renowned physician. I shall also teach him to drive out the devil." (It reads like a bit from one of Martin Luther's letters. It will be noticed by those who read his letters that he often uses the most unconventional language.) "If you read mission reports from India you must think they contain much humbug and no reality. However, things will get better if the matter is

carried on intelligently. Here in Colombo, the capital of Ceylon, things begin to get better respecting religion among the European. The Wesleyan Methodists have come, and where their faithful men are seen a spirit of life is entering the dead bones. They are almost like the Moravians, only more practical and not so miserably bigoted."

Ringeltaube's letters and speeches show us a strong original impulsive man, with the weaknesses which are often found associated with such characters. His exaggerated expression of the trouble caused him by writing reports reminds us of the outbursts of Carlyle. There are men who outgrow these wayward moods, who learn to subdue them as they get older, and "Time who in the twilight comes to mend all the fantastic day's caprice" tames the impatience that laid them open to the blame of the critic whose pulse beats more temperately. We have to take good men as they are. What reason had Ringeltaube to feel as if death were preferable to the writing of "Reports"? Take the two estimates out of many of his work in Southern India, Tanjore and Travancore.

The author of Dr. Bunting's life—the great Wesleyan statesman-preacher—writes: "Ringeltaube's zeal and success as a missionary in Southern India are still had in remembrance.

"In 1812 he had baptised about 700 converts. He was utterly regardless of toil and hardships, often dining contentedly on coarse grain boiled for horses."

Of his work in Tanjore, Mr. Horst, the father-in-law of his successor in Travancore who knew it thoroughly, wrote: "Between March 1st, 1806, and August 23rd, 1807, in the Tinnevelly district of the Tanjore Mission Ringeltaube had charge of three catechists, and up to that time there were 5,300 native Christians, while 200 Christian children and 1,048 adult heathens were baptised. To this number must be added eighteen souls who came out from Romanism, so that these congregations received in that time an increase of 1,266 members, and consisted on August 22nd, 1807, of 6,566 souls."

The Directors of the London Missionary Society in their report for the year 1808 record their appreciation of Ringeltaube thus: "We rejoice in his fidelity and exertions, and cherish the hope that his labours will be wisely directed and prospered by the Great Head of the Christian Church, whom he earnestly desires to serve and glorify in the ministry of the Gospel."

Of his work in Travancore, his biographer, the Rev. Wm.



Indian City Life.

Robinson, Salem, South India, says: "Maharasan was the first of two solitary Christians in Travancore in 1806. The church commenced in the courtyard of his house. In 1901 the adherents, including baptised Christians, numbered 65,714; schools, 368; scholars of both sexes, 16,540; contributions of native churches, Rs. 26,581; buildings for public worship, 363; mission hospitals, which serve all classes of people, independent of creed or race, treated 67,000 patients in 1901; while the mission press since 1853 has issued 7,301,260 publications."

SUNSET WHILE YET DAY



INGELTAUBE was utterly careless of conventions, either in dress or speech, or way of doing things. To such men as he large liberty has to be allowed. It speaks well for the Directors of the London Missionary Society that they recognised this in his case. Officialism is not always so wise. His eccentricity was not without some compensating advantages. The fact that he seldom wore a coat, except when somebody gave him one, that he wore a shabby straw hat, that he wandered about Travancore living in a common hut, made him a not less but more impressive figure in the eyes of the people among whom he lived. They believed him to be inspired. Travancore is not Cranford. He would not have made the same impression on the three elderly maiden ladies of the village Mrs. Gaskell has immortalised.

The oddity of his appearance, in consequence of this splendid indifference to conventional habits of attire, long kept his memory green. Legends have grown up about him in Travancore. It is said that whenever he was expected at the British Residency, the servants used to keep a vigilant look out for his approach, capture him, and not until they had forcibly arrayed him in suitable attire, which they brought with them for the purpose, did they usher him into the palace. It makes a pretty picture, the servants struggling to get a reluctant missionary into a new suit of clothes.

His speech, always direct and forcible, had never the apologetic note in it. His wrath against insincerity in his converts often broke out stormily. He "laid hands" on irritating natives in a sense not contemplated by the com-

posers of the service for the "Form and Manner of making of Deacons."

All this was neither discreet nor justifiable; but he does not seem to have been liked any less by his people for a method of correction not usually tolerated when administered by other men to persons of adult years.

As a specimen of the strange legends that may or may not be true, to which these occasional indiscretions gave rise, take the following:—

"On one occasion when he went to Muthalur, he was accused by an old woman of cheating, because his eggs were not paid for (probably through his servant's misconduct). He became perfectly enraged at what he called their ingratitude and extortion. The people declared that he cursed them and theirs; that he especially cursed the fowls, and that in consequence of his curse the Muthalur fowls for years laid fewer eggs than those in other places." The curse happily expended itself in 1850, and the production of eggs became normal.

If he loved shabby clothes like Beranger, the French poet, if his anger was terrible, if he disturbed the egg market, he made ample amends, and in ways an ordinary man would never have thought of.

His friend Vedamanikam, to whom reference has been made already, shows how wise an administrator Ringeltaube was of the funds he had collected, when the famine in 1810-1812 came to Mayiladi. He told those who came for relief, "He who will not work, shall not eat." He set them to sink a well and cultivate land at Mayiladi. On completing these he set them to dig a tank and make a canal. Thus he supported starving multitudes by help he himself collected. Yet the famine was not over, and no other work could be found for the people, so he sent them to the Marunthavali Hills to collect a red stone (rubies or garnets). These were mounted in gold or silver, and sold to the gentlemen who contributed

to the relief fund, and the proceeds of the sale went to the starving poor. The scarcity was so great that grain could hardly be purchased for money.

As long as he could he bought rice and doled it out. At length he saw that money and grain must soon be exhausted. Looking at the man who measured the grain, he said, "Son! God will graciously remove your famine and have mercy upon you before half the remaining grain is spent! Then the people say he entered into his prayer room, and before he came out there was a very heavy rain, and the country began to be fertilised." So writes Vedamanikam, and we believe it in spite of the jeers of the Canon of St. Paul's.

Ringeltaube, like all men of his temperament, had times of disillusion and depression, alternating with seasons of spiritual exaltation. It is easily explained. Many of his converts disappointed him and caused him great anxiety, and it is probably in one of these crises that there occurred the strange event which closes the story of his life on the note of tragedy.

How the end came to this strenuous, unselfish, faulty but splendid servant of Christ and the London Missionary Society no man knows, nor does any man know the place of his rest. His grave, unlike Robert Louis Stevenson's, hallows no mountain summit; his bones consecrate no stormy sea; no desert tribe guards his lonely sepulchre. No woman lifts her eyes to a window in the street of an Indian city as to a shrine because he had passed away within that chamber.

To find the grave of St. Paul somewhere beside the mouldering walls of Rome, where year by year the spring violets bloom and the red roses of an Italian summer shower down with spendthrift profusion their painted petals, would not be more difficult.

The last that is known of him is thus told:—

"Simply and heartily as this singular man appeared to be given to the instruction of the poor people while he re-

mained among them, he suddenly left them. No one seemed to know why, only that something seemed to have come into his strange head of other and more hopeful work to the eastward. While at Madras, whither he went to embark, he called on the Rev. Marmaduke Thompson, with whom he spent an evening in a very extraordinary costume, for he had no coat on even then, though about to undertake a voyage to the sea. The only covering for his head was something like a straw hat of native manufacture; yet wild as was his appearance, Mr. Thompson was greatly interested in his conversation, and helped him."

After that night no one knows whither he went, nor was he heard of again. There are few things in biography more pathetic than this sudden disappearance of the missionary of Travancore. Browning might have handled it magnificently.

Still, it matters little where the "eccentric!"—word of evil omen on the lips of prudent treaders along beaten ways—servant of the Lord of the Harvest rests, in desert waste or mountain height; beneath cathedral dome; or in a village churchyard; goes down with a foundering ship or up in a chariot of fire, so long as the seed he has sown multiplies itself from springtime to springtime; and autumn after autumn sees the reapers carry in to the Lord of the Harvest the golden sheaves.



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